

Message Text

SECRET

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13

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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P R 130715Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2553

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 8385

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, CB

SUBJ: INTERNAL POLITICAL CRISIS

REF: PHNOM PENH 8326

1. FOLLOWING SIR ROBERT THOMPSON'S CALL ON LON NOL AUGUST 12 I STAYED BEHIND TO DISCUSS PRIVATELY WITH THE MARSHAL MY CONVERSATION OF AUGUST 10 WITH IN TAM AND OUR EFFORT TO PERSUADE HIM TO STAY IN HARNESS AS PRIME MINISTER.

2. I COMMENTED THAT WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT OR HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL AT THIS TIME WOULD GIVE AID AND COMFORT TO THE OTHER SIDE AND IMPAIR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC. WHATEVER THE MARSHAL'S RESERVATIONS AS TO IN TAM'S QUALIFICATIONS AND ATTITUDE, I THEREFORE HOPED HE WOULD DO HIS BEST, THROUGH WHATEVER CONCESSIONS AND GESTURES ARE POSSIBLE, TO KEEP IN TAM IN OFFICE OVER THE NEXT WEEKS.

3. THE MARSHAL REMARKED WITH SOME HUMOR THAT IN TAM IS SO MERCURIAL AND UNPREDICTABLE AS TO RULE OUT A
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GUARANTEE BY ANYONE OF HIS NEXT COURSE OF ACTION, BUT

HE PROMISED TO DO HIS BEST TO CONVINCE IN TAM TO STAY ON.
HE COMMENTED THAT HE FULLY APPRECIATES THAT THE IMPACT
ON INTERNATIONAL OPINION COULD BE VERY ADVERSE.

4. FOR THE LONGER TERM, HOWEVER, THE MARSHAL EXPRESSED
SERIOUS DOUBTS AS TO IN TAM'S STEADFASTNESS. I RESPONDED
THAT IF IN TAM DID IN FACT RESIGN AT SOME POINT, IT
WOULD BE IMPERATIVE TO REPLACE HIM AT ONCE AND AVOID THE
PROLONGATION OF THE CRISIS FOR THE THREE WEEKS CUSTOMARILY
NEEDED FOR CONSULTATIONS AMONG POLITICAL PARTIES.
LON NOL SAID HE AGREED, AND ADDED THAT THE SOCIO-
REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICANS ARE PRESENTLY DISCUSSING A
POSSIBLE UNITED FRONT.

5. COMMENT. THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL IS EXPECTED TO
BE IN SESSION MOST OF TODAY AUGUST 13 TO DISCUSS PRESSING
ECONOMIC QUESTIONS AND TO RECEIVE A WRITTEN EXPOSE
WE UNDERSTAND IN TAM IS DRAFTING CONCERNING THE CAUSES
OF HIS DISSATISFACTION AS PRIME MINISTER. HOPEFULLY
THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WILL ASK FOR AMPLE
TIME TO REFLECT ON THIS DOCUMENT AND THUS BUY FURTHER
TIME FOR COMPROMISE AND CONCILIATION.
SWANK

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NNN

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